

## Guidance for (new) authors on how to structure an article for JPD

The *Journal of Peacebuilding and Development* (JPD) is a tri-annual peer-reviewed journal providing a forum for the sharing of critical thinking and constructive action at the intersections of conflict, development, and peace. Aiming to develop theory-practice and South-North dialogues, JPD offers holistic, practical, and visionary approaches that seek to influence policy and practice in ways that support transformative processes globally.

Publishing peer-reviewed scholarship helps promote the global exchange of ideas. The process serves as a check to ensure that work is new and original, grounded in existing literature and scholarly debates, and the research and writing are of sufficient quality to warrant publication. The following information is designed to help you succeed in the peer review process by outlining commonly observed issues that we as editors have seen over the last 15 years. We hope that consulting these guidelines will help strengthen your submission going into peer review.

### **Before you begin writing**

Before you decide to submit your article to JPD, review recent issues for articles, particularly those that are relevant to your own research, to get a feel for the types of articles that JPD publishes. Confirm that your research question(s) and methods fit the aims and scope of the journal and do not replicate pieces that have been recently published. How does your contribution add to the scholarly discourse in a new, interesting, and valuable way?

### **Structuring your manuscript**

#### **A. Article Title and Abstract**

The title and the abstract are key elements that inform the reader of the contents of the manuscript and, as a rule, are the parts of the manuscript that gain the widest exposure. An effective title should be concise, informative, and academic in nature.

*TIP: Write down a few possible titles, and then select the best to refine further. Ask your colleagues their opinion. Spending the time needed to do this will result in a better title.*

The abstract serves important purposes: it summarizes the purpose of the research, hypotheses, research design, and findings of the study. A well-written abstract conveys the research questions and findings succinctly, helping readers decide whether to delve further into an article.

Your Abstract should answer these questions about your manuscript:

- What was done?
- Why did you do it?
- How did you do it?
- What did you find?
- Why are these findings useful and important?

Abstracts should be no longer than 200 words, and should be distinct from an introduction; they should give the main purpose of the article as well as its key argument(s) and finding(s).

#### **B. Keywords**

Keywords provide important search terms and help with discoverability. Target your keywords to the subfields and audiences you wish to reach with your article. Select 4-6 keywords, avoiding general and plural terms and multiple concepts. Also, avoid using words that are already in the title. Be sparing with abbreviations, only using those firmly established in the field.

Example:

**Manuscript title:** 'We Refuse To Be Enemies': Political Geographies of Violence and Resistance in Palestine

**Possible keywords:** Military occupation, resistance, settler colonialism, transnational solidarity, violence

Before you begin writing, keep in mind that articles are 7,000 words maximum, including endnotes and bibliographical references. Briefings are 2,500 words maximum. Submissions that do not adhere to these guidelines, or submissions that fall in between these word counts (i.e. 4000 word submissions) are likely to be returned to the author.

### **C. Introduction and Literature Review**

A strong introduction engages the reader in the problem of interest and provides a context for the study at hand. In introducing the research dilemma authors should provide a clear rationale for why the problem deserves new attention, placing the study in the context of current knowledge and prior theoretical and empirical work on the topic.

The literature review sets the stage for the importance of the research by demonstrating the importance of the question asked and the data collected in light of existing research—theoretical and/or empirical—on the topic. Whereas it is impractical to exhaustively describe all prior research, the most current and relevant studies should be cited as well as touchstone pieces shaping the theoretical framework and/or chosen case study. A literature review should flow conceptually rather than discussing each author in turn, and it should be structured so as to set up the research question and main argument of the article. In brief, it should a) summarize current knowledge of the field and b) identify gaps in knowledge filled by the current study while establishing the study's context.

### **D. Methodology**

The methodology section provides the reader with all the details regarding how the study was conducted.

The methodology section should ensure the reader that the author used appropriate, valid, ethical, and sound methods of sampling and/or appropriately selected their data collection instruments and procedures. Methods should be aligned with the study's purpose and research questions. Case study selection and sampling techniques should be clearly explained and adequate for the question under investigation and conclusions drawn. For example, if a comparative case study approach is used, the author should justify why that method suits the research question, and why the cases chosen are most fitting for answering it. If the author uses interview techniques, the author should discuss how and why participants were selected, why the number of interviews conducted are sufficient, as well as the demographic characteristics of the sample and type of interviewing used (e.g., informal, semi-

structured, formal survey, focus group). Ultimately, the methods section should be written in enough detail such that another researcher could duplicate the study.

### **E. Results and discussion**

The Results section should include a summary of the collected data and analyses, and should follow from the literature review and research question(s). All results should be described in a logical order, including unexpected findings, and the discussion should continue to tie back the main argument, with the data used to illustrate points of the argument. Quotes from interviews and other specific observations from field notes should be included here. While authors may summarize or paraphrase some research findings, particularly in cases where anonymity is necessary, all key findings should be supported by more than general discussion, and should draw on specific data. Any tables used to summarize data should be mentioned in the narrative (i.e., cited in text), labeled, and sourced clearly.

In the course of the discussion, authors should:

- Compare results with those from previous studies: Are they consistent? If not, discuss possible reasons for the difference.
- Discuss what the results may mean for researchers in the same field, researchers in other fields, and the public.
- Mention any inconclusive results and explain them sufficiently. Suggest additional research needed to clarify the results.
- State how the findings could be applied to the policy and practice communities.

### **F. Conclusion**

Briefly describe the limitations of the study and the importance of the findings. Providing a link to future research; offer recommendations for further study. Recommendations that are direct and specific are more useful. In other words, do not end the article with a recommendation that is too imprecise to be operationalized, or too grand to be implemented.

### **G. List of References**

The reference list should include recent publications reflecting current work in the field and should be relevant and readily retrievable. References should be correctly formatted, accurate, adequate, and balanced. The Journal uses Harvard Style. Be sure to include relevant literature from JPD showing how the current research is in dialogue with ongoing discussions and debates within the journal and broader fields of peace and conflict studies, peacebuilding, and development. Full referencing information can be found here: [JPD Style Guide](#)

### **Ethical Considerations**

The manuscript should comply with ethical and best practice standards. This should include mention of institutional review board approval for work with human subjects, and proper referencing throughout. Ensure that the entire manuscript is original work, and if the work and/or words of others was used, that they have been appropriately cited or quoted.

## Issues to Consider

- The strongest manuscripts usually have one point to make. They make that point powerfully, back it up with evidence, and locate it within the field.
- Ensure the writing is accessible by using clear language. Non-native speakers of English may need an editor or native English-speaking colleague review and edit the piece before submission.
- Write a conclusion that builds on the findings and does not introduce new material nor repeat what was said. Instead, it should identify lessons learned, key take away points, and make policy recommendations stemming from the research. Questions, data and methods, findings, and broader significance need to be original, clear and well-integrated into discussions in the field.